

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T AMMAN 1661

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EG, SY, JO, PLO, XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH RIFAI ON QUADRIpartite DEVELOPMENTS

1. RIFAI WHO RETURNED EARLIER THIS WEEK FROM FOUR DAYS OF MEETINGS IN DAMASCUS AND LATER HAD TALKS IN AMMAN WITH MAHMOUD RIAD, ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL, PROVIDED AMBASSADOR WITH FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN "QUADRIpartite GROUP".

2. HE SAID THAT SYRIANS COMPLAIN THEY ARE HAVING A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE WITH THE PALESTINIANS AND ARE UNHAPPY WITH THEM. THE SYRIANS TOLD RIFAI THAT EVENTUALLY THE PLO MUST MAKE SOME KIND OF A DEAL WITH JORDAN IN ORDER TO WORK OUT NEGOTIATIONS ON THE WEST BANK. THE SYRIANS ALSO COMPLAINED THAT EGYPT HAD BEEN USING JORDAN AS A SCAPEGOAT IN TRYING TO AVOID A QUADRIpartite MEETING, BY INSISTING THAT JORDAN AND THE PLO HOLD A PRELIMINARY BILATERAL. THE EGYPTIANS, SYRIA SAID, WERE BEHIND PLO RADIO ATTACKS ON JORDAN FROM EGYPT, IN ORDER TO KEEP THE SITUATION FLUID UNTIL THE SECRETARY VISITED THE AREA.

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EM RIFAI NOTED THAT THE SYRIANS HAD TOLD HIM THAT FAHMI HAD SENT A MESSAGE TO THE PLO ASKING WHY THEY HAD NOT ALSO ATTACKED SYRIA WAS WELL AS EGYPT.

4. RIFAI CONCLUDED THAT FIGHT NOW, BECAUSE OF HEAVY EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN DIFFERENCES OVER THE NEXT STEP IN NEGOTIATIONS, IT WAS KING HUSSEIN OF ALL THE CONFRONTATION LEADERS THAT HAD THE BEST RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, SYRIA, AND EVEN THE PLO WHICH ATTACKED JORDAN, BUT SINCE RABAT, HAD NO REAL BASIS FOR COMPLAINT.

5. ON A FUTURE QUADRIPARTITE MEETING, JORDAN REAFFIRMED WITH SYRIA AND RIAD THAT THE MEETING SHOULD COVER POLITICAL AND MILITARY COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FOUR, NOT JUST GOJ-PLO DISPUTES. THEY APPARENTLY AGREED. RIFAI ADDED, THAT PLO DEMANDS FOR POLITICAL AND MILITARY ACTIVITY IN JORDAN ARE INTERNAL QUESTIONS TOUCHING ON JORDANIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND HE WILL NOT PERMIT THEM TO BE DISCUSSED BY THE FOUR. ON THAT BASIS, HE TOLD RIAD AND THE SYRIANS HE IS READY TO MEET AT ANY TIME. TENTATIVELY, IT WAS AGREED THAT TALKS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN DAMASCUS AFTER THE ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL MEETING SET FOR MARCH 24TH. HOWEVER, KHADDAM WISHED TO KEEP THE DATE FLEXIBLE UNTIL THE RESULTS OF THE SECRETARY'S TRIP ARE KNOWN. IF THE RESULTS ARE NOT TO ITS LIKING, KHADDAM, RIFAI SAID, INDICATED THAT SYRIA MAY NOT ATTEND.

6. RIFAI ALSO NOTED THAT JORDAN HAD COMPLAINED THAT SYRIA SEEMED TO BE DOING NOTHING TO STOP FEDAYEEN INCURSIONS INTO JORDAN. SYRIAN ANSWER APPARENTLY WAS "IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE TROUBLE, YOU OUGHT TO SEE WHAT PROBLEMS WE HAVE." NEVERTHELESS, SYRIANS PROMISED TO STEP UP BORDER PATROLS AND MOVE FEDAYEEN CAMPS AWAY FROM THE BORDER AREA. THEY ALSO OFFERED TO COOPERATE WITH JORDAN ON THE BASIS OF ANY FURTHER INFORMATION JORDAN COULD DEVELOP.
PICKERING

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